This Week at Our Lady of the Black Hills

Monday, December 8
The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Geneses 3:9-15, 20; Psalm 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38 (white)
8:00 am: Daily Liturgy (Intention: For the repose of Ross Packer)
6:30 – 8:00 pm: Cub Scouts
6:30 – 8:00 pm: Youth Ministry Core Team Meeting
7:00 pm: Holy Day of Obligation Liturgy (Intention: For the full recovery of Joe Kulhavy)
7:00 pm: Book Club Meeting

Tuesday, December 9
St Juan Diego, hermit
Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 96:1-2, 3 and 10ac, 11-12, 13; Matthew 18:12-14 (violet/white)
8:00 am: Daily Liturgy (Intention: Nancy Lien, for blessings & health this Advent season)
9:00 am – 2:00 pm: Sewing Club and Luncheon
7:00 pm: Advent Reconciliation Service at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City
7:00 – 8:30 pm: Boy Scouts

Wed., December 10
Isaiah 40:25-31; Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8 and 10; Matthew 11:28-30 (violet)
8:00 am: Daily Liturgy (Intention: For the repose of Lorraine Kaufmann)
9:00 am – noon: Food Pantry
6:00 – 8:30 pm: Gatherings of Grace – Welcoming a Stranger

Thursday, December 11
St Damascus, pope
Isaiah 41:13-20; Psalm 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13ab; Matthew 11:11-15 (violet/white)
8:00 am: Daily Liturgy (Intention: Courtney Montgomery for blessings & health this Advent season)
7:00 pm: Advent Reconciliation Service at OLBH
7:00 pm: Knights of Columbus Members Meeting

Friday, December 12
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
Zechariah 2:14-17; Judith 13:18bcde, 19; Luke 1:26-38 (white)
No Daily Liturgy

Saturday Morning, December 13
Memorial of St. Lucy, virgin and martyr
Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Psalm 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13 (red)
9:00 am – noon: Food Pantry
8:00 am: Daily Liturgy (Intention: Grace Montgomery, for blessings & health this Advent season)

Saturday Evening, December 13
Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28 (violet/rose)
3:30 – 4:30 pm: Sacrament of Reconciliation
5:00 pm: Sunday Liturgy (Intention: For the repose of Lorraine Kaufmann)

Sunday, December 14
Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28 (violet/rose)
8:00 am: Sunday Liturgy (Intention: For the OLBH Community)
9:15 – 10:00 am: Children's Choir rehearsal
10:30 am: Sunday Liturgy (Intention: For the repose of William Richards)
3:00 pm: Christmas Cantata at Piedmont Valley Lutheran
7:00 pm: Eucharistic Adoration with Evening Prayer

Mass Ministry Schedule

12/13 -12/14	5:00 pm	8:00 am	10:30 am
Bread Baker	Marlys Sears		
Altar Servers	Courtney Cassen Joe Schulte Tyler Trautman	H. Ehresmann Aaron Thies Jack Tidemann	Tyler Corbine Andrew Corbine C. Weaver
Precious Body	Joe Deaver	Barb Erickson	Kathy VanAsma
Precious Blood	Jim Scherr Barb Scherr John Wang Cathy Wang	Lorinda Collings Diane Clarke Kathy Amiotte Mary Antonsen	Jan Schurman Sharon Long Ken VanAsma Jim Hoag
Lectors	Jerry Meyer Doris Hume	Tom Collings Diane Clarke	Laura Varilek Pauline Stoffel
Sacristans	Joe & Linda Schacher	Gary & Barb Erickson	Ken & Kathy VanAsma
Ushers	Joe Norman Diane Norman	Stan Barber Don Everson	Jim Pulaski Dorothy Tinnell
Choir	Family Choir	Regina's Minstrels	Folk Choir

Intercessory Prayers
Life and Health Concerns: Joe Creek, Nancy Sass, Kent Antonsen, Sr. Margret Hinker, Sam Guiliano, Pat Hettesscheidt, and Michelle McCarrick.
Repose: Sara Beth Sewell

Collection Report
November 30, 2008

Loose..... $ 1,658.05
Envelopes..... 1,906.00
Student 75.72
Building Fund 0.00
Adopt a Seminarian 0.00
Other 8,557.00
Total .....$ 12,196.77

"Never in the history of the world have so many people been so rich; never in the history of the world have so many of those same people felt themselves so poor."
Lewis Lapham

Sparks from Father Mark

When I started school again, I was given a prayer by St. Thomas Aquinas to be used before study. I keep this prayer in the books I am reading, in the notebooks I am writing in and on my prayer space in my room as a reminder for me. I pray for God's grace and ask for the discipline I need to be a lifelong learner of the faith. Here is the prayer: "Gracious God, giver of all good gifts, bless me with a keen intellect, a strong memory, method and facility in learning, subtlety in interpreting, and eloquence of speech. All this to honor your name and to serve your people, Amen."

I thought about this prayer as we enter into this Advent time. We prepare for the coming of Christ into our lives and for Christ to come again in glory at the end of time. Advent is a hectic time of the year with many things happening in our lives. And yet the church calls us to be patient, to wait and to stay alert for the coming of the Christ Child in our midst again. And because of this, we need all the help we can get to be faithful to the spirit of Advent.

The University of Creighton has a wonderful web page, which can be linked from our parish web page with lots of ideas and prayers to help one in their Advent journey. I encourage you to spend some time checking out these advent prayers. If you do not have a computer at home, feel free to use the one in the parish library. Here is the web page address:
http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/daily.html
Here is one of my favorite prayers from their web page:

Shopping during Advent
Dear God, as I look through my gift shopping list, I hold up to you each person listed on it. Slowly, one by one, I ask that the fire of your abundant love burn within each of them. I pray that the gift I find for each person will bring joy into that life.

But, help me to keep a balance this season, Lord. Let me keep my buying in perspective, not to spend more than I need to or can afford. Let me not give in to the pressures of this world and not equate love with money spent. Let me always remember the many, many people who have so much less in material things. Help me to buy wisely, so that my choices will not burden those in other countries who are so deeply affected by this country's economy.

And finally, loving God, help me to find time in the frantic moments of each day to become centered on you. Walking through a store, riding on the bus, hurrying down a street: let each of these times be moments when I can remember your incredible love for me and rejoice in it.

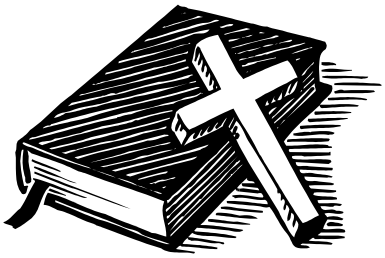
Blessings,

Hope for New Life

by Cathy Sass

I've been a member of the Hope for New Life jail ministry since February. In these last few months, I've visited the jail many times and am always touched by how open and willing to conversion the ladies are. Their hope and faith is remarkable.

The ministry wants to get everyone started out on the right foot, so all new-comers are offered a Bible. I have never seen anyone turn it down. On average, we hand out between fifteen and twenty Bibles a month. This is the ministry's biggest cost. I am asking you to take a special look at the giving tree in the narthex this advent season. There are ornaments specifically for Hope for New Life and the inmates at the Pennington County jail. The ministry requests the Bibles be paperback, as well as NAB. Catholic Youth Bibles are popular among the inmates, but not required. If you cannot afford a Bible, we ask that you at least consider offering a Pieta Prayer Book. The books include a wide variety of prayers and devotions that the inmates find helpful and are only a few dollars.



Also, every year at this time Hope for New Life hosts a city-wide effort to bring the light of Christ to the inmates. Part of that includes delivering goody bags that include cookies, candy, and a prayer card or two. A lot of help will be needed this year, including donations of candy (hard candy only, please) and help assembling the over 500 bags. We will meet at Blessed Sacrament on Friday, December 19th from 4 – 7 pm. If you have any questions, please contact me, and I will get you the information you need. We also need volunteers to visit the jail on Sunday, December 21st. At that visit we will sing carols, offer personal testimony, as well as hand out the bags. If you're interested, please contact me by December 10th.

Hope for New Life is also working at expanding into the men's area – we currently only visit the women's cell block. If you or someone you know would be interested, please let me know - call (605-392-1569) or e-mail (cathy.sass@gmail.com).

What better way is there to share the love and peace of Christ this advent?

For the Ride Home

by Ted Bergh

Scripture

- Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! (Isaiah 40:3)
- Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. (Psalm 85:11)
- …one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. (2 Peter 8,9)
- "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." (Mark 1:3)

Reflection

- Where (and when) is the place that you are preparing?
- Where is the place where kindness and truth are one and the same?
- Where is your journey taking you? Is it where you want to (always) be?

…every man is Christ on the cross, whether he realizes it or not. But we, if we are Christians, must learn to realize it. That is what it means to be a Christian: not simply one who believes certain reports about Christ, but one who lives in a *conscious confrontation with Christ* in himself and in other men.

This means, therefore the choice to become empty of one's self, the illusory self fabricated by our desires and our fears, the self that is here now and will cease being here if this or that happens.

It means finally preferring silent action and interior sacrifice, because words have become too cheap, and programs grow on every tree. Better than any program is the decision to accept suffering, knowing why and for what, without justifying oneself. People are learning once again to fast for peace.[1]

[1]Merton, Thomas, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, Doubleday: New York, 1966/1989 P. 219

Second Sunday of Advent

"'Hope' is the thing with feathers—/That perches in the soul—/And sings the tune without the words /And never stops—at all—." Emily Dickinson's definition of hope captures what many of us have a hard time defining. Hope is not blind optimism, nor arrogant certainty, nor wishful thinking. Hope, the theme of today's Gospel, is the knowledge that God would not desert us, that we will endure difficult times to see a better day. Hope gives us the strength to seek peace and demand justice, and to envision the world as God intended it to be.

Monday
(Is 35:1-10; Lk 5:17-26)
Look for miracles. "We have seen strange things today," the crowd says after seeing Jesus cure an afflicted man. Strange things—miracles, reconciliations, changes of heart—are all around us, but every day we miss them because we're busy looking elsewhere. Make it a habit to find one example of God at work in your life each day.

Tuesday
(Is 40:1-11; Mt 18:12-14)
Acknowledge your sins. Today's Gospel, along with the parable of the prodigal son, shows the lengths God will go to in order to save each of us. It is easy to resent the "troublemaker" who gets all the attention, but that misses the point: We are each the lost sheep, the prodigal son, in need of salvation. God in his mercy is offering us just that.

Wednesday
(Is 40:25-31; Mt 11:28-30)
Seek respite with God. Both readings today promise rest to the weary. And who isn't weary this time of year? You don't have to cut yourself off from the season's busyness to find rest. Grasp moments of quiet meditation wherever you can find them—turn off the radio in your car, or recite the rosary as you clean the house.

Thursday
(Is 41:13-20; Mt 11:11-15)
Listen closely. John the Baptist, who heralded Jesus' coming but was ignored and ultimately killed, takes center stage this week. If we saw him on a downtown street today, dressed in rags and preaching with a burning intensity, would we think he was crazy? Or would we listen closely enough to recognize the truth he speaks?

Friday
(Is 48:17-19; Mt 11:16-19)
Ignore labels. Sometimes you can't win: Ascetic John is criticized for his severity, while sociable Jesus is called a glutton and worse. Today you're more likely to hear "conservative" and "liberal" thrown around, but the result is the same. Labels blind us to each other's humanity, and to the role in salvation that each one of us must play.

Saturday
(Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Mt 17:10-13)
Carve out some quiet time. The weekends before Christmas are usually nonstop, with little time left for prayer or reflection. It's impossible to forgo the shopping and the parties, but for every busy hour you spend, try to spend an equal amount of time in the quiet, listening and watching for signs of our Savior's arrival.

OLBH Parish News

A Request from/for the Heart

In September, Father Mark returned to a vegan diet. In doing a better job of caring for his heart, he has made a commitment to eating foods that are heart healthy. This restrictive diet means no sweets, no baked goods or other Christmas goodies (except maybe fruit baskets ☺). So, as a community, let's support Father Mark (and his cardiologist), by keeping the sweets, baked goods and Christmas goodies away from the Rectory.

Decorating for Christmas

Donations for poinsettias for the Church for Christmas would be greatly appreciated. Donations can be left at the Church office. If you would rather purchase flowers yourself, please leave them at the church between Dec. 15 and Dec. 21. Flowers really make a big difference in our Art and Environment and your donations are greatly appreciated. We will be decorating for Christmas after the Dec. 21 10:30 mass. This takes a lot of hands to make it go quickly and any volunteers are appreciated.

The Christmas Offering

A Musical Celebration of the Greatest Gift of All

You are invited to a Christmas musical presented by the choirs of the Piedmont Valley Ministerial Association on Sunday, December 14, at 3:00 p.m. at the Piedmont Valley Lutheran Church (16155 Spring Valley Road, near I-90 Exit 44). This musical recalls and celebrates the many offerings in the Christmas story. Mary, the innkeeper, the wisemen, the shepherds, the angels, each in their own way offered precious gifts to the most treasured Christmas offering of all, Jesus Christ.

Drop Scott a line . . .

Please note correction in the mailing address from last week's bulletin: Scott Silbernagel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Silbernagel, is serving in the US Navy . . . please keep him in your thoughts and prayers and drop him a line. He'd love to hear from you! Email: silbersr@CVN71.Navy.Mil or US Mail at: EM3 Silbernagel, Scott R.
RE Division
USS Theodore Roosevelt CVN-71
FPO AE 09599-2871

Cathedral Life Night

Our high school youth and adult youth ministers are invited to…Cathedral Life Night (9th-12th graders). They are closing out 2008 with a Coffee House at St Thomas More Commons, Sunday Night, December 14th from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. And their 3 bands will perform **Outlaws of Poker Flat: The Commodities.** You are invited to bring a can of food for Church Response. If you are interested in attending, please call Teresa in the parish office to sign up by Thursday, December 11th. We need to have the names of all those who are going. Thank you

A Choir for Children and Teens

A choir for third graders through tenth graders will sing at the 5 pm Mass on Christmas Eve. Rehearsals continue December 14 and 21 from 9:15 to 10 am in the practice room downstairs. See you there! Questions? Call Lorraine at 787-5168.

Youth Summer Experience

Steubenville Rochester - July 16-19, 2009
Theme: Above All Location: Mayo Civic Center
Hosted by Steve Angrisano, Chris Padgett and band Sonar.
For those entering 9th grade in 2009 through 12th grade
Plus Valley Fair http://www.valleyfair.com

"Yours, O LORD, are grandeur and power, majesty, splendor, and glory. For all in heaven and on earth is yours; yours, O LORD, is the sovereignty; you are exalted as head over all." 1 Chronicles 29:11

Registration/Liability forms: Located in the Gathering Area or online at www.rapidcitydiocese.org (only do Registration and Liability form only) in the youth section. Space available for 215 people, a waiting list will form, THIS EVENT SELLS OUT EACH YEAR TURN IN YOUR REGISTRATIONS TO TERESA THOMPSON IN THE PARISH OFFICE ASAP TO RESERVE YOUR SPACE.

Cost: $315. Deposit: $100, due with registration forms beginning Dec. 1st. Final payment: $215 due April 20. All payments are non-refundable. Cost includes bus, conference, 10 meals, Valley Fair, 3 nights hotel, 2 t-shirts. Please turn in checks and registrations to Teresa Thompson in parish office (Teresa@olbh.org or 787-5168).

Info about Steubenville Rochester:
http://www.partnershipforyouth.org/steubenville2009Rochester.html

Returning Catholics Ministry

Do you know someone who has left the Church? Most of us do not have to look very far to find non-practicing Catholics in our circle of family and friends. Many of us are concerned about these loved ones, but we don't know how to help them. Obviously, most of them are searching, but how can we help them find their way home? As baptized, practicing Catholics, we have a precious gift of faith and love from the Lord that needs to be shared with our non-practicing brothers and sisters. First, we need to pray for them. Next, we need to extend a personal invitation to them to come home to the Catholic Church. Most non-practicing Catholics are waiting for an invitation to return. Many mistakenly think they are excommunicated and are not welcome to return for a variety of reasons. Many non-practicing Catholics carry with them a tremendous amount of guilt and misinformation about the Church and are afraid of approaching the Church for fear of being rejected. You can make a tremendous difference in someone's life simply by reaching out to them and telling them that we miss them and would like for them to come back home to our Church family. Here at Our Lady of the Black Hills we have a special program to help non-practicing Catholics return to the Church entitled "Catholics Returning Home." The first series begins January 13, 2009 at Our Lady of the Black Hills, 7-8:30 pm. Please pass this article on to anyone who might be interested.

For more information call 787-5168 or olbh@olbh.org

Diocesan News

A Message from Pope Benedict XVI

"Organ donation is a unique testimony of charity. In a time such as ours, frequently marked by various forms of egotism, it is more and more urgent to understand how it is necessary to enter into the logic of gratitude to correctly understand life. There exists, in fact, a responsibility of love and charity that commits oneself to make one's own life a gift for others, if one truly seeks one's own fulfillment. As Lord Jesus taught us, only by giving one's life, can you save it (cf. Luke 9:24)."

Pope Benedict XVI, "A Gift for Life: Considerations on Organ Donation." Address to participants in the International Congress sponsored by the Pontifical Academy for Life, Nov. 7, 2008 (From the Diocesan Pro-Life Commission)

On Fire for the Lord . . .

Stir into flame the gift of God. (2 Timothy 1:6)
Single Catholic Women 18-35 years of age are invited to spend a week-end in prayer, sharing, and vocation discernment with the Little Sisters of the Poor. Join the Sisters and other young women and experience God's grace! The retreat will be held January 2-4, 2009, in Palatine, Illinois. No registration fee. For more information, contact Sr. Joseph Maureen at 812.464.3607 or by e-mail at vocationinfo@littlesistersofthepoor.org.

Friends of Luke & Martha

The Friends of Luke & Martha is a singles group for individuals between the ages of 21 and 55. If you have never married, are separated, divorced, widowed or a single parent, please join us on December 14 in Room 107 at 7:00 at Blessed Sacrament Church for a discussion on "Getting to know Jesus" through the Gospel of Mark. Call Terry at 341-1143 or Lisa at 342-2305 for more information.

Christian Family Planning Seminar

Christian Family Planning Seminar will be offered by the Natural Family Planning Ministry on Saturday, January 17th, 9:00 a.m. - Noon at St. Joseph's in Spearfish. *This seminar is a requirement for engaged couples getting married in the Diocese of Rapid City.* Married couples, or anyone who wants to learn more about Natural Family Planning, are encouraged to attend. For more information, or to register, call Jill or Kathy at Family Life Ministries at 343-3541.

Women of Faith

Dr. Claire Ten Eyck will speak on "**Saints Anne and Joachim, Models of Family Life and Stressful Situations**" Wednesday, December 10, 9-11a.m. at the Cathedral's handicap accessible hall (basement). This topic is inspired by the Cathedral's stained glass windows and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8th. New members are welcome. Babysitting is available. For more information, call 716-4479.

Victim Assistance

Our diocese provides confidential, caring, knowledgeable support in cases of sexual misconduct by church personnel. If you need this type of support please contact Maryann Tully, Victim Assistance Coordinator, at 209-3418.

Happiness is an Inside Job

Level II Separated & Divorced Support Group, "*Happiness Is An Inside Job*", begins at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, January 8th at St. Therese Church, 532 Adams St., Rapid City. Level II is an eight-week non-denominational support group using John Powell's book by the same name. The group is designed to help those who are separated or divorced to deepen their healing experience and find new meaning and purpose in their lives. Previous Level I attendance helpful but not required. Registration fee (includes the book) is $38.00. Pre-registration is required! For information, contact Jill at Family Life Ministries at 343-3541.

Charitable Gifts from IRA Accounts – Income Tax Benefits Extended

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 permits individuals who have reached age 70½ to exclude from gross income certain distributions of up to $100,000 from a traditional IRA. In order to be excluded from gross income, the distributed funds must be paid directly by the IRA trustee to a qualified charitable organization. In general, a qualified charitable organization is one for which an itemized deduction is allowed if payment is made to the organization. Your parish, the diocese, the Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation, Catholic Social Services and the Rapid City Catholic School System are all qualified charitable organizations.

The 2008 Extenders Act passed into law on October 3, 2008, extends the tax benefits for charitable giving from IRA accounts to IRA distributions made during 2008 and 2009. If you will be age 70 ½ or older during 2008 or 2009, have funds in an IRA, and are interested in donating to a charitable organization, this new rule may generate significant income tax benefits for you. Check with your tax advisor.

Healing Ministry

"There are times that give him (doctor) an advantage, and he too beseeches God. That his diagnosis may be correct and his treatment may bring about a cure" *Sirach 38:13-14*
Prayer remains relevant for the health care providers and the Christian community to bring healing to the sick. Come to listen to a talk on this subject at Rapid City Regional Hospital in the Rushmore Room on December 11, 2008 at 4:00 pm.

La Celebración de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day Mass begins at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, December 12, at Blessed Sacrament Church, 4500 Jackson Boulevard, Rapid City. All are invited to attend the bilingual Mass, which will be celebrated by Bishop Blase Cupich. A potluck meal in the parish hall will follow. Those who are not regular Spanish Mass attendees are asked to bring a dessert to the potluck.